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## House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WOMACK).

### DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,  
December 20, 2011.

I hereby appoint the Honorable STEVE WOMACK to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,  
*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Dear God, we give You thanks for giving us another day. Bless the Members of the people's House as they depart the Nation's capital to return to their homes. May they find rest and renewal during their time with family and friends.

Bless our Nation as the year comes to a close. Help us to look to the future with hope and committed to a renewed effort to work together as citizens of a united America.

Help us all to be truly grateful for the blessings of this past year. May this holy season of hope for so many people prove to be a healing balm for our Nation.

Bless, also, as this session comes to a close, the absent Member of this assembly, GABBY GIFFORDS. Speed her recovery. May she be always reminded of our prayers and best wishes for her. Thank You for the remarkable progress she has already made.

And as always, we pray that all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

### THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(a) of House Resolution 493, the Journal of the last day's proceedings is approved.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. CARTER led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to five requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

### THE WORST CASUALTY OF WAR

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, just about sunrise in the desert of the sun and the valley of the gun, the last American troops left Iraq. It was this past Sunday, December 18, 2011. It has been 8 years, 7 months, and 24 days since the war began. The Americans are coming home by Christmas. Mission accomplished.

4,474 Americans gave their lives, and thousands of others were wounded. The last American casualty was Army Specialist David Emanuel Hickman from North Carolina, killed on November 14. These Americans died in a land they had never been for a people they had never known.

The Americans have liberated Iraq from a dictatorship. To apply Ben

Franklin's statement on the founding of America: We have given the Iraqis a free country; let's see if they can keep it or not.

The choice and responsibility for Iraq is now with Iraq, but we here in America shall remember those who served and returned, those who served and did not return, and those who served and returned with the wounds of war. As one wounded trooper said yesterday: "The worst casualty of war is to be forgotten."

And that's just the way it is.

### CONGRATULATING SAINT XAVIER UNIVERSITY COUGARS ON WINNING THE NAIA NATIONAL FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

(Mr. LIPINSKI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Saint Xavier University Cougars on winning the NAIA National Football Championship on Saturday.

It was another thrilling game and a fitting way for Saint Xavier to bring home its first national championship in any sport to the school. From the freshmen to the seniors, from the top-ranked offense to the defense and the special teams, everyone played a part in the victory and the Cougars' amazing season.

This is the first time since 1913 that a college football team from Chicago has won a national championship, and the Cougars did it with a lot of homegrown talent. Chicago, Lemont, Joliet, Tinley Park, Oak Lawn, Palos Heights, Park Ridge, Rockford, Frankfort—these and many other towns are well represented on this historic team.

The players, Coach Mike Feminis and his staff, Saint Xavier, the city of Chicago, and the State of Illinois should all be proud. Congratulations to the

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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